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SUBJECT: AMB VERVEER AND DEPUTY SG MIGIRO DISCUSS WOMEN AT THE UN

REF: A. USUN 418, B. 2008 USUN 822

11. (U) Summary: Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer and UN Deputy-Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro met April 28 at the UN for a cordial discussion of the need to move forward on reforming the UN's gender architecture, the importance of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, the lack of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of improving maternal health, and the desirability of convening meetings of female foreign ministers. End summary.

12. (U) Ambassador Verveer expressed U.S. commitment to reinvigorating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Security Council resolution 1325, both of which highlight the need for women to be part of the solution to problems such as poverty, violence and conflict, and to Security Council resolution 1820 on sexual violence in armed conflict. D/SG Migiro outlined the challenges facing women, including sexual violence as a tool of war and more generalized violence against women. She noted that the challenges need to be addressed in various contexts, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes; security sector reform (SSR), where the judiciary, police and armed forces all can take steps to address violence against women; rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts in countries emerging from conflict; and in refugee-hosting countries. Migiro underlined that women's empowerment and involvement is crucial to progress in all these areas. She also listed female genital mutilation, forced marriage, lack of schooling, and the imbalance of power relations between men and women as areas that needed attention from the international community and civil society.

13. (U) D/SG Migiro asked for USG support for reforming the so-called gender architecture within the UN system, which she hopes will be decided upon by the General Assembly before September 2009. Ambassador Verveer assured Migiro that the United States recognizes the need to change the current institutions that deal with women's issues, and will work to establish a strong system that will place women as the drivers of change. Migiro relayed that the missing link in the system-wide coherence package, the paper on funding, should be available within two weeks, enabling discussions on the package to move forward.

14. (U) Ambassador Verveer reiterated USG commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), lamented the lack of progress on reducing maternal mortality, and underlined the need for basic health delivery systems and family planning. Migiro welcomed the renewed interest of the USG, and agreed that maternal health, and the empowerment of women more generally, has an impact on eliminating poverty and achieving all the other MDGs. She recognized that USG support for malaria interventions has had very positive results in Africa, including for pregnant women who are vulnerable to malaria.

15. (SBU) Verveer thanked the D/SG for her personal efforts to ensure that more women were assigned to high level positions within the

United Nations. Migiro noted the Secretary-General had appointed nine women to top positions, and said that she was working to put women into Assistant-Secretary-General and office director slots, as well as Under-Secretary-General postings. She credited the Women Leaders' Working Group, led by former Secretary Condoleeza Rice and Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, with raising this issue and keeping it on the SG's radar screen. Migiro praised the Working Group as a useful initiative, which had also done good work on examining women's access to justice. She encouraged the continuation of the group with Secretary Clinton's participation, and suggested that it focus on specific, targeted actions, and that future meetings expand participation to Foreign Ministers plus one in order to facilitate follow-up.

16. (U) This message has been cleared by Ambassador Verveer.

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